

## Firewise Landscaping and Maintenance



Decreasing the threat of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.

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## Why Firewise Landscaping?

- No home or property can be guaranteed not to burn, but their ignitability can be reduced by mitigating hazards that are present



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## Why Firewise Landscaping?



- Wildfire will find the weakest link in defense measures not taken on the property

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## Why Firewise Landscaping?

- ◊ A home's ability to survive depends on:
  - ◊ It's roofing material
  - ◊ Quality of defensible space surrounding the home



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## Why Firewise Landscaping?

- ◊ Creating defensible space:
  - ◊ Enhances safety
  - ◊ Reduces intensity of fire
  - ◊ Provides emergency workers space to do their job



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## How do we achieve Firewise Landscapes? Bareground, Pavement, and Rock...



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No, but we can do better than...



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## What is Firewise Landscaping?

- Designing, installing, and maintaining landscapes to...
  - Minimize the fire hazard to structures, residents, and neighbors
  - Maintain components of native ecosystem
  - Achieve homeowner's goals
- Firewise plants, good design, and maintenance help establish a defensible space and reduce fire intensity near structures.

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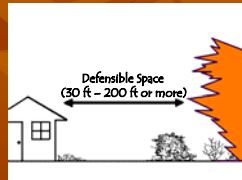
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## What is Defensible Space?

The area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend the house.



Dependent on slope and surrounding vegetation

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## Proper Firewise Landscaping?

- Continuity, density, and arrangement of fuel types greatly affect:
  - Rate of fire spread
  - Fire intensity
  - Ability to control the fire
- The amount of fuel that is allowed to accumulate can be critical in the defensible space zone surrounding the home

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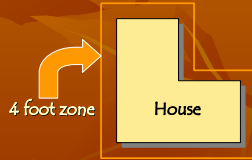
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## Proper Firewise Landscaping

- Create a 4 foot non-flammable zone immediately surrounding the home
  - Lawn
  - Concrete sidewalk
  - Rock
  - Mineral soil
- A home, with non-flammable siding and foundation, can use properly spaced fire resistant plants in this zone



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## Proper Firewise Landscaping

- From the non-flammable zone out to at least 30 feet, landscaping should be arranged such that only low intensity surface fires can occur



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## Trees Near the Home

- Individual trees can be located near the house if irrigated and limbs are trimmed at least 15 feet from house
- Trees located within 15 feet of the house are considered a part of the house



Johnny Creek, Pocatello

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## Avoid Continuous Vegetation

Establish spaces between plants and groups of plants on the ground



No spaces between vegetation



Spaces created by removing branches

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## Avoid Continuous Vegetation

- Provide a minimum of 8 feet between crowns of individual trees or clumps of trees
- Provide a minimum of 4 feet between individual shrubs or clumps of shrubs



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## Avoid Ladder Fuels

No spaces between vegetative layers



Provide a space between trees, shrubs, and lower growing vegetation



Spaces created by limbing up

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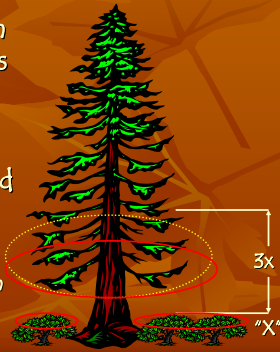
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## Avoid Ladder Fuels

- ◊ Provide a space between vegetative layers 3 times the height of the lower growing vegetation

- ◊ This space can be created through several ways:

- ◊ Limb up taller layer .....
- ◊ Limb up taller layer and trim down lower layer
- ◊ Remove lower layer



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## Limbing Up Trees

- ◊ Large trees: usually limbed up 10 feet – 16 feet
  - ◊ Example: Douglas fir
- ◊ Smaller trees: usually limbed up 10 feet or 1/3 of tree height whichever comes first
  - ◊ Example: Juniper



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## Keep A Natural Appearance

- When trimming shrubs or limbing-up trees, remember to keep a natural appearance
- Not every tree has to be limbed-up to exactly the same height
- Spaces do not have to be between every tree and shrub
- Clumps of trees and shrubs with adequate spaces can be maintained to create a natural setting around the home

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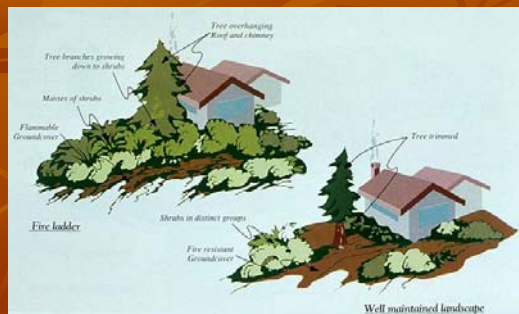
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## Maintaining a Firewise Landscape



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## Take Care of the "Little Things"

- Fuels closest to the home can influence whether a home burns down in a wildfire
  - Keep roof, gutters, and small corners of home clean of plant litter and other debris
  - Remove dry plant litter that accumulates in and under trees and shrubs
  - Mow watered lawn and dried grass close to home regularly
  - Keep all combustibles, such as firewood or petroleum products at least 30 feet away from the home

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## For More Information...

- ◊ Refer to Firewise Landscaping handouts
  - ◊ Firewise Landscaping – Guide for Homeowners Living in the Wildland-Urban Interface
  - ◊ Living with Fire – a Guide for the Homeowner
  - ◊ Landscaping for Wildfire Prevention
- ◊ [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)
- ◊ [www.3riversrcd.org](http://www.3riversrcd.org)

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